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ARE MEN HAPPIER?; WHY A GROWING HAPPINESS GAP?

ANCHORS: DIANE SAWYER, ROBIN ROBERTS

REPORTERS: DIANE SAWYER (NEW YORK, NY USA), ROBIN ROBERTS (NEW YORK, NY USA), JOHN BERMAN (NEW YORK, NY USA)

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CONTENT: BETSEY STEVENSON

ROBIN ROBERTS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) We're gonna switch gears and talk about sobering news about happiness. There's new research from several studies finds there's a growing happiness gap between men and women.

GRAPHICS: ARE MEN HAPPIER?

GRAPHICS: WHY A GROWING HAPPINESS GAP?

ROBIN ROBERTS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) I'm just gonna put it simply here. Women appear to be less happy than men, a total reversal from a few decades ago. But, so why? Do happier men make less happy women? Can anything be done about this? John Berman reports.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) This famous woman from days of yore was smiling. But could those days be over?

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Are you happy?

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

No.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) In the 1970s, surveys found women to be happier than men. Today, new studies say we have switched places. Behold the happiness gap.

BETSEY STEVENSON (ECONOMIST)

We find is that women have become less happier or less satisfied with their life over time, and, in particular, less happy relative to that.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Surprising, perhaps, given the increased opportunities and choices for women in the modern world. There could be reasons.

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

Women end up with a lot of the responsibility, and men play a lot more than women do.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Really?

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

Really.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) You're pointing the finger at my people.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But she might be right. One study found that since the 1960s, men have cut back on activities they find unpleasant. Women, not at all. And many women are now stretched and stressed between the workplace and home.

BETSEY STEVENSON (ECONOMIST)

If you're at work, you feel torn that you should be at home. And if you're at home, you feel like you should be at work. And even if you cut back your hours so you become a stay-at-home mom, you think you're a failure as a career woman.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) Another intriguing possibility, the Mona Lisa smile could have been hiding something.

BETSEY STEVENSON (ECONOMIST)

Perhaps one of the achievements of the women's movement is that women feel more honest, feel more capable of being honest about their lack of happiness.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) But it isn't all gloom and doom.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) How happy are you?

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

Scale of one to 10?

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Yeah.

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

Today?

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Yeah.

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

It's my day off, so 10.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) And there may be solutions.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) You think men should be pretty unhappy?

PEDESTRIAN (FEMALE)

No. I think that they should be just as unhappy as the women are.

JOHN BERMAN (ABC NEWS)

(Voiceover) For 'Good Morning America," John Berman, ABC News, New York.

ROBIN ROBERTS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) I love, 'Yeah, men can be just as unhappy as we are."

DIANE SAWYER (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) Right. Yeah, that would cheer her up.

ROBIN ROBERTS (ABC NEWS)

(Off-camera) I know, it would. Exactly.

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